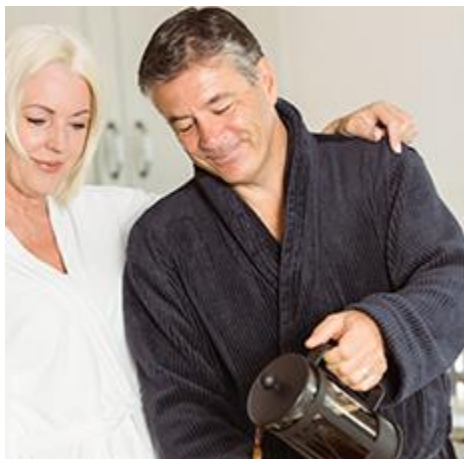


## Gratitude: It isn't Just for Thanksgiving Day!

### Practice gratitude for better health and happiness



You wouldn't run a 5K without training for it, right? And anyway, the benefits of exercise come from doing it consistently, not heading out for one race. The same holds true for gratitude. With some practice, you can reap benefits that go far beyond the Thanksgiving table – including a healthy heart, strong relationships, and greater happiness. Here, three ways to practice gratitude:

**1. See the world with fresh eyes:** When you get used to things, you hardly notice them. This is called habituation, and it's the enemy of gratitude. Does your spouse fix your morning cup of coffee just the way you like it? Do you love the view out your kitchen window? It's time to wake up

and take notice of these things again so that you can fully appreciate them, and feel and express your gratitude.

**2. Swap negatives for positives:** Strap on a pair of gratitude goggles! That way, you'll notice when your mind latches onto the negative (another cold, rainy weekend, yuck) and you can intentionally do a 180-turn, changing your attitude to the flip side (an opportunity for a cozy dinner with friends!).

**3. Keep a gratitude journal:** While this may seem like a lot of work, it doesn't have to be - and it's well worth it! Thank the people in your life for things large and small, and be sure to zero in on details. Rather than being grateful for "a healthy family," express your gratitude for your aunt who's been cancer-free for five years. Instead of thanking your spouse for "being so great," thank him for the foot rubs or for taking out the trash even when he's running out the door to work.

### Joyful holidays:

#### Tamp down the stress and ramp up the fun this season!

If your holiday memories recall Dickens – "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." – it's high time you create a new game plan. While a certain amount of stress comes with the season, a few simple steps can tip the scales toward joy. Here are a few helpful tips for letting the magic of the holidays shine through:

**Cover your bases.** The daily habits that keep you feeling good all year, like regular exercise, sound sleep, and nourishing meals, can slip away during the holidays faster than you can whistle "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer." But you need them now more than ever. Resist the urge to burn the midnight oil wrapping gifts, stick with your morning walk, and find five minutes a day to sit in a quiet space, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. That inner calm will help you manage any "outer" chaos.

**Less is more.** Instead of bouncing around to four holiday parties in a night, pick one (at most, two). If you're hosting a holiday gathering, keep your menu simple and nourishing rather than elaborate – and take people up on their offers to help. Brainstorm ways to simplify gift-giving with your family and friends, such as doing a Yankee swap or going in on a group experience.

**Focus on fun.** There is nothing like music to transform drudgery into delight! Crank up your favorite tunes, whether Jay-Z or Tchaikovsky, and you'll find yourself sailing through tasks with a smile. Splice in a family dance party for extra credit, extra exercise – and extra endorphins.

